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ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

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COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

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December 3, 2004

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The Honorable Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Mr. Zerhouni:

Recent news reports and congressional hearings are expected to result in significant changes in the way that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) handles potential conflicts of interest posed by the financial relationships between NIH scientists and drug manufacturers. These are constructive steps.

We are writing now to request information on NIH policies regarding potential conflicts of interest of researchers who receive NIH grants and scientists who review grant proposals. Specifically, we request the following information:

- 1) Please describe NIH policy for screening researchers who receive NIH grants for potential conflicts of interest. Are these researchers allowed to sign consulting agreements with companies whose drugs they receive NIH grants to study? Are they allowed to receive stock options? If these researchers are allowed to maintain financial arrangements with drug manufacturers, please describe the disclosure rules that are in effect.
- 2) Please describe NIH policy for screening scientists who review applications for NIH grants for conflicts of interest. Are scientists who review NIH grants allowed to have financial interests in companies that could be affected by the outcome of NIH-funded research?
- 3) Please describe the methods used by NIH to ensure that researchers who receive or review NIH grants follow appropriate procedure to prevent or disclose potential conflicts of interest.

Thank you for your assistance with this request. Please provide us with a response by December 17, 2004. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Susie Schulte,

The Honorable Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D.

December 3, 2004

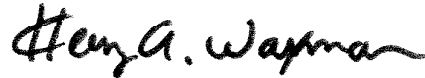
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Majority Professional Staff, at (202) 225-5074, or Brian Cohen, Minority Senior Investigator and Policy Advisor, at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Davis". The script is fluid and cursive.

Tom Davis
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry A. Waxman". The script is fluid and cursive.

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member